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AUTHOR Salerno, Anne; Fink, Mary
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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes findings by the Parental Resources for Involvement in Migrant Education (PRIME) project on the current status of parent involvement in the Migrant Education Program. The literature consistently stresses the importance of parent and family influence on student achievement. Children from low income and minority families have the most to gain from parent involvement; parents do not have to be well educated to help. Changing the term "parental involvement" to "home-school partnership" means recognizing the sharing of responsibility between home and school. Although most states embrace the concept of partnership, few have allocated the staff or funding needed to put the concept into practice. A panel of six experts from diverse ethnic backgrounds met in Albany in February 1991. They discussed the parent involvement practices in their programs, matching parent training and materials to community needs, homework as a possible link between school and home, the parent's role as advocate, recognizing the impact of cultural differences, and making parents feel welcome in school. Migrant parents discussed barriers to parent involvement, strategies to involve fathers and other family members, and the importance of gaining the support of the business community and migrant employers. A survey of state directors of migrant education provided information on successful parent involvement strategies: home visits, at-home learning activities, parent training, cultural enrichment activities, improved parent access, and improved school-home communication. An appendix outlines state responses. (SV)

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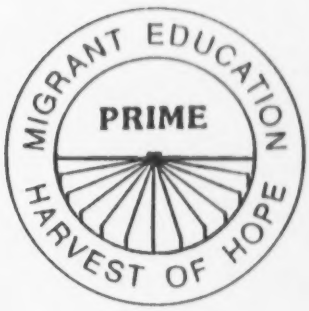
MIGRANT PARENT INVOLVEMENT REPORT



Parental Resources

for Involvement in Migrant Education

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HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS:

MIGRANT PARENT INVOLVEMENT REPORT

by
Anne Salerno, PRIME Coordinator
Mary Fink, PRIME Resource Specialist

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Holcomb Building, Room 210
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The PRIME Advisory Committee:

Mary Campbell
David Gutiérrez
Louis T. Marsh
Retha Nero
Chita Puente
Manuel Recio
Sister Maureen Smith, OSF
Eutha Tart
Kathryn Sue Updike
Marcia Verzaro-O'Brien
Patricia Ward
David Yniguez

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PREFACE

The Parental Resources for Involvement in Migrant Education (PRIME) project was funded as a Migrant Education Section 1203: Interstate/Intrastate Coordination Program, to address the issue of parental involvement and to research the current state of the art with the Migrant Education Program. The research included convening a national panel of experts in parental involvement, hosting a series of migrant parent work groups plus surveying migrant educators and conducting literature searches. This document is the compilation and analysis of the data obtained. The material within discusses, among other things, parental involvement concepts, overcoming barriers, community and business support, and successful strategies for parental involvement.

Parental involvement is a term currently in favor among educators regarding parents' responsibilities and actions in their children's education, whether at home or in school. Another mode of thought shifts the term "parental involvement" to "home/ school partnership," with the implication that there is a more equal sharing of responsibility between home and school. This takes the burden from the parent alone and allows it to be shared with the school. Although parental involvement is a term most familiar to practitioners and is used throughout this report, it should be considered synonymous with home/school partnership.

This publication was written by Ms. Anne Salerno, PRIME Coordinator, and Ms. Mary Fink, PRIME Resource Specialist. As staff of the BOCES Geneseo Migrant Center, they have been involved in the preparation and publication of several research papers, newsletters, monographs, and other reports involving Migrant Education issues. Their main focus areas have included home/school partnerships and migrant secondary-aged youth activities/services.

The PRIME project staff are pleased to have had the opportunity to develop this publication, and we each extend our appreciation to Dr. Thomas Fitzgerald, Chief, New York State Department of Education, Migrant Unit, who also served as Project Director for this project; Ms. Christine Brooks, Associate, New York State Department of Education, Migrant Unit, and Ms. Lorraine Wise, Program Officer, USED, Office of Migrant Education, Program Office. We would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the state directors of Migrant Education and other migrant educators who responded to a survey requesting information on parental involvement strategies. A compilation of that survey is included in the appendix to this report.

We hope that migrant educators and service providers will be able to glean from this report some useful strategies to enhance or expand service to migrant families.

Robert Lynch
PRIME Site Administrator

PARENTAL RESOURCES FOR INVOLVEMENT
IN MIGRANT EDUCATION (PRIME)

HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS: MIGRANT PARENT INVOLVEMENT REPORT

Migrant Education, perhaps even more than mainstream education, can rely on the strength of the family to reinforce cultural values and maintain family ties. Parent involvement has been recognized by educators within and outside of the Migrant Education community as one of the key factors that affect student achievement, playing an even more important role than socioeconomic factors, for example. Parents' attitudes toward school and learning, their interest in their children's education, their high expectations, their reading to their children and having reading materials in the home all contribute to a learning environment that can boost children's academic achievement. From a very humanistic side, Migrant Education can draw on parents' love for and pride in their children as a powerful resource.

I. Parent Involvement Concepts

Nancy Chavkin (1991) cites the Center for Educational Planning's 1989 migrant dropout prevention project study of high-achieving and low-achieving migrant students in which parents of high-achievers had positive attitudes toward school, could give examples of ways the school helped their children, spent time communicating with their children and provided them with educational experiences in contrast to parents of low-achievers. An ethnographic study of migrants notes that the migrant children who successfully completed their education had at least one family member who gave encouragement and support (Prewitt Diaz et al, 1989). Family influence on a migrant child's education is strong, at times creating a conflict if the child's economic help is needed or if education is viewed as unimportant for continuing a life as a farmworker. The ethnographers pointed out that migrant mothers were often the strongest supporters of education.

Ken Lawless (1986) quotes James Day's views on the important role of the family:

> "For migrant children whose homes are poor, as much attention must be given to the family as is given to the child's schooling. Teachers, counselors, and community services must be used effectively to improve the family situation of migrants. It can be expected that with home and family improvements the migrant child who is different will make corresponding gains in school" (p.8).

The introduction to Anne Henderson's (1987) anthology of parent involvement studies stresses that, "Programs designed with stong parent involvement produce students who perform better than otherwise identical programs that do not involve parents as thoroughly, or that do not involve them at all" (p. 1). Henderson goes on to say that, "Schools that relate well to their communities have student bodies that outperform other

schools. Children whose parents help them at home and stay in touch with the school score higher than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved. Schools where children are failing improve dramatically when parents are called in to help."

Henderson sums up a few facts regarding parental involvement:

- "The family provides the primary educational environment.
- "Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, long-lasting, and well planned.
- "The benefits are not confined to early childhood or the elementary level; there are strong effects from involving parents continuously throughout high school.
- "Involving parents in their own children's education at home is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the school.
- "Children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve parents. Parents do not have to be well-educated to help.
- "We cannot look at the school and the home in isolation from one another; we must see how they interconnect with each other and with the world at large" (pp. 9-10).

"Children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve parents. Parents do not have to be well-educated to help."

In a review of the literature on parental involvement, Beth Sattes (1985) states that parental attitudes are usually based on their own school experiences and are not likely to change unless there is intervention. However, positive experiences with their children's education can change parents' attitudes and behaviors, ultimately shaping their children's academic performance. Sattes points out that through parental involvement and increased familiarity with the schools, parents become more supportive, expressing greater satisfaction with the schools and their children's achievement.

Commitment to Parental Involvement

Joyce Epstein (1991) reports that California has developed a policy that requires all districts and schools to create their own policies and practices for involving families in their children's schooling. She sees this as an important

step in that it not only recognizes the positive relationship between school curricula, family involvement, and school success but also in that it acknowledges the partnership at all grade levels, with all families, and without isolating students in categorical programs. California's state initiative in school-family partnerships is to be commended. Lamentably, many states have not taken such an initiative. As Epstein observes, "Today, most schools embrace the concept of partnership, but few have translated their beliefs into plans or their plans into practice."

On the average, states nationwide allocated about one FTE (full-time equivalent) per each 500,000 students in public schools toward parental involvement.

In 1988, a survey was sent to state education agencies to assess the scope of parental involvement activities (Nardine and Morris, 1991). The survey reinforces Epstein's admonition that, "Words about the importance of parent involvement are meaningless without financial and technical support." On the average, states nationwide allocated about one FTE (full-time equivalent) per each 500,000 students in public schools toward parental involvement. Survey data showed that only nine states committed one or more FTEs per each 100,000 students. Migrant Education and Chapter I programs had the largest number of staff devoted to parent involvement activities. Frank Nardine and Robert Morris summarize the extent of states' commitment:

> "Levels of staffing and funding in all states are very small when compared to the size of the job to be done. Even those states that claim to provide leadership in parent involvement practices provide insufficient financial and human resources to support strong programs of collaboration between schools and families at the district and school levels" (p. 366).

PRIME Panel

A panel of experts in parental involvement convened in Albany, New York, on February 7-8, 1991 as part of Parental Resources for Involvement in Migrant Education's (PRIME) research-gathering goal. Six experts from diverse ethnic backgrounds presented overviews of their programs or research activities and then responded to questions PRIME staff posed in regard to parental involvement in the migrant population. The panelists were selected to give PRIME staff a foundation in current parent involvement practices nationally with the idea that this knowledge could yield useful applications for Migrant Education. The panel included: Diane D'Angelo, Dr. Joyce Epstein, Warlene Gary, Howard Lewis, Elena Pell, and Dr. Pablo Pérez.

Diane D'Angelo, Research Associate of RMC

Research Corporation in Hampton, New Hampshire, discussed some of the materials and workshops that her organization develops and presents. The Regional Technical Assistance Centers (R-TACs), which she represents, work with Chapter 1 programs in providing parent-ready materials, a resource bank on parental involvement articles, focus papers, training materials, and workshops on parental involvement. Ms. D'Angelo noted the importance of matching the service to the needs while including parents in the process.

Another panelist, Dr. Joyce Epstein, Co-Director for Johns Hopkins' University Center on Family, Community, School and Children's Learning in Baltimore, Maryland, views parental involvement as a process instead of an event. The process may possibly take three to five to ten years but must begin immediately. Dr. Epstein believes that parental involvement is not a substitute for school improvement. It is not a panacea for improved reading scores or better schools. Parental involvement is about children and sharing the sphere of influence between the family and the school. Dr. Epstein listed five types of parental involvement which include: Parenting/Home Conditions, Communication, Volunteering, Learning Activities, and Governance/ Advocacy. She views homework as one possible connecting link between home and school and recommends that teachers design homework assignments that need to be shared with or shown to an adult. The child can show how the teacher taught the material. Even if parents are not literate, they can take an interactive approach in talking about the homework assignments with their children. There should be two-way communication between home and school on these assignments with the parent's signature and a teacher response. Dr. Epstein stated that there is a positive relationship between parental involvement in reading, when done on a regular basis, and a student's achievement gains.

Parental involvement is about children and sharing the sphere of influence between the family and the school. Dr. Epstein listed five types of parental involvement which include: Parenting/Home Conditions, Communication, Volunteering, Learning Activities, and Governance/ Advocacy.

The value of linking with community services to meet the needs of the total child was commented on by Warlene Gary of the National Education Association in Washington, DC. She cited an interprofessional consortium which focused on at-risk children in 1990 as an example. Linkages through a health information network, the PTA, and business partnerships are other modes that Ms. Gary has established. Ms. Gary tries to combine parents and teachers in training sessions since minority parents are treated differently in schools. She views parents' roles as advocates not as volunteers who supplant professionals. She feels that every child should have a "guarantor" who will act as a surrogate parent and can be trained as an advocate.

Howard Lewis, Assistant Superintendent for Federal Programs in Buffalo, New York, felt that it is essential to include parents in the planning process of parental involvement. Parents need to be trained if they are to participate. Mr. Lewis views self-esteem as a slow process of readiness. To achieve self-esteem, parents, in Mr. Lewis's belief, must be trained so that they can succeed at something. Mr. Lewis described parental involvement activities at the Parent Center in Buffalo as giving parents a sense of belonging. Parents must spend quality time with their children during a visit. A side-by-side computer literacy class for parents and children, an infant program, and classes in parenting skills, sewing, aerobics, and verbal arts are available at the Center. An event Mr. Lewis suggested is inviting 70-80 agencies for a day so that parents can "shop" for quality services. He also suggested giving parents a Social Services directory.

"If all children are not learning, what can I do to help?"

Elena Pell, Program Development Director for ASPIRA Association of Washington, DC, felt that a needs assessment is vital. ASPIRA developed materials for Hispanic parents based on determined needs. Ms. Pell views leadership skills for parents as essential for meeting with the Board of Education, for example. ASPIRA started with a community group (Puerto Rican parents) within a community context. Ms. Pell believes that parental and community advocacy are necessary. She observed a difference in communication styles between Anglo and Latino cultures that has program implications for Migrant Education. For instance, in the Anglo community, the written word is most important, followed by telephone communication, and then informal chatting. In Latino culture, the opposite is true. This knowledge can be useful in reaching Hispanic migrant parents more effectively.

"If all children are not learning, what can I do to help?" Dr. Pablo Pérez, Superintendent of McAllen Independent School District in Texas and a former migrant himself, asks his staff to ponder. He stressed the importance of parent involvement in a major revamping of his school system over the eight year period of his position. To assist parents, there is a campus plan for each site on parent involvement, PTAs in each school, and four parent centers in schools during the evenings where parents can bring their children to be tutored, can work with computers and on parenting skills. He noted that the schools were losing 30-40 teen parents each year and saw the need to establish a Teen Parent Alternative School. Drawing on his own experience as a

migrant, Dr. Pérez reflected on his parents' attitudes and listening to elders in the camps to learn. Dr. Pérez noted that failure has been ingrained within many migrant families. He recognizes that it is important to graduate the first born child to set the pattern for younger siblings. He felt that both parents should realize their responsibility in the education of their children. Parents sign a contract in his school district to show their commitment to attend conferences, ask their children about school, talk about discipline, and restrict the amount of television their children watch. Dr. Pérez looks at parental involvement as part of the institution rather than an appendage. His quote, "Take it beyond talk and into walk" rings true.

PRIME staff asked panelists to describe parental involvement. It was suggested that the term "home-school partnership" or "school-family connections" be substituted to include non-traditional families and to focus more responsibility on the school instead of the parent.

Panelists felt it was necessary to look at the different educational levels of parents and develop appropriate strategies. Parents need exposure to universities and successful role models to help them see the value of education, Mr. Lewis observed. Parents can help change staff attitudes, Ms. D'Angelo noted, if, for example, an adult literacy presentation is given by a parent who has completed the program. She also felt that school staff need to be sensitized about who migrants are.

The panelists agreed on the need for commitment of resources to parental involvement. Mr. Lewis noted the success of the Buffalo, New York School District, which has set aside monies to support a separate parent center to ensure that parents can become involved in the education of their children while increasing their own educational skills. Dr. Epstein advises the commitment of space and a person in charge to make parental involvement effective:

> "• Family/school coordinators...may be crucial to the success of school, district, and state programs to link schools, parents and communities. Coordinators guide school staffs, provide inservice training for educators, offer services to parents, and perform other tasks that promote partnerships.
>
> "• Programs should literally make room for parents. "Parent rooms" or "clubs" in school buildings or "parent centers" in the community are important ways of making parents feel welcome. In these sites, parents share and discuss ideas, obtain information and resources, ... learn from each other about family problems and solutions, and so on" (Epstein, 1991, pp. 348-349).

II. Overcoming Barriers

Lack of Welcoming Atmosphere

During a PRIME workshop held at the 1991 National Migrant Education Conference for Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Buffalo, New York, migrant parents were asked to discuss some of the obstacles they had noted in their areas for successful school/family partnerships. A number of parents mentioned the difficulties of involving parents when parents perceived the schools as unwelcoming.

Part of the difficulty may lie in the feelings of inadequacy of some migrant

farmworkers. Chavkin cites a 1986 report by Simich-Dudgeon on parental involvement with limited English proficient students that many migrant families view parental involvement as a new cultural concept, believing that it is the responsibility of the school to educate their children and that their own participation may be counterproductive and misconstrued by the school as interference. The average level of schooling of migrant farmworkers is eighth grade (DeMers, 1988). Many have had no schooling in the United States and less than six years in their country of birth (Prewitt Diaz et al, 1989). These parents sometimes consider themselves ill equipped to enter into their children's education, thinking that such decisions are best left to the teachers, who have had many years of training in education. Many also have memories of bad experiences in school and have decided that while education is good for their children, they prefer to avoid schools themselves.

Not all can be explained, however, by some parents' avoidance of school situations and lack of experience with the school structure. Migrant parents have shared experiences about schools' seeming lack of interest in their participation. A parent was heard to say, "Well, I called, but my English isn't so good, you know. And the one who answers the phone, well she couldn't hear me. And she kept asking me again. She seemed really mad about it." Parents have also questioned the motives of staff: "That principal wants our boys to drop out." They have noted the numbers of migrant farmworker children placed in special education classes and wondered if school staff were making inappropriate placements. "It seems as if our children always get put in special ed. I don't know why."

A four-year study was conducted in the Carpinteria, California school district and community that focused on parent involvement and empowerment. The Carpinteria school area includes many migrant farmworker children. Delgado-Gaitan (1990) points out that according to a number of anthropology of education studies, students from outside the white mainstream find education a discontinuous process due to differences in language, values and practice. Middle class families' values match those of the schools while ethnically different families from lower incomes, those not schooled in the United States or those with limited English proficiency tend to be isolated from school culture. With their lack of education, their cultural differences, and low socioeconomic background, migrant farmworkers are outside the white mainstream that most often defines the school atmosphere.

To provide a positive school atmosphere for all school children and their families, the state of Florida has set up a Red Carpet Schools program in which participating schools foster involvement by becoming friendly, welcoming places ("Red Carpet Schools", 1990). During 1990, a month-by-month outline was developed to encourage family participation including a family survey, conferences, home visits, open houses, Teacher Recognition Week, employer promotion of parent involvement, and involvement in specific projects. Every member of the staff of a Red Carpet School is included in the concept, from the custodian to top administrator. The schools are especially sensitive to the needs of migrant families, parents who are non-English speaking, illiterate, or low-level readers, two-income families, and single parent families.

Poor Home/School Communication

Anytime PRIME staff met with migrant parents, parents raised the issue of ineffective home/school communication. Parents say that many times they are only informed when something is "wrong," a discipline problem or poor scholastic performance, for example. Parents and schools do not always understand that communication can be two-way and that both have responsibilities. Parents often do not realize that they can initiate contact with the school even if there are no problems. Another area of concern is that communications from the school are not always in a form that parents can understand.

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As part of their overall program of parental involvement, schools must make a commitment to home/school communication. Communications from school to home must be frequent, including positive messages as well as negative, and in the language of the family. Other approaches can include telephone calls, home visits and neighborhood meetings. Many communication channels can be used. Dr. Pérez mentioned finding both bilingual newsletters and radio announcements valuable for reaching parents in the McAllen Independent School District. Communications from home to school must be encouraged and welcomed.

Parents' Needs

In ethnographic data reported by Prewitt Diaz et al (1989) migrant parents expressed some of the reasons they didn't participate in parent involvement activities: lack of transportation and translation, shyness or embarrassment to speak at meetings, the opinion that the schools know what is best for the children, parents' reluctance to challenge a teacher's authority and prestige, and lack of interest in the topics of the meetings. In addition, parents have other needs to be met in order to enable them to attend and participate in activities, such as child care and flexible scheduling of meetings and school events. Accommodating parents' needs requires careful planning and the concerted effort of migrant educators to be most effective. Pennsylvania Migrant Education staff schedule parent meetings between the hours of 10AM and 2PM to adapt to the many migrant dairy workers' milking schedule. The Migrant Education program in the South East Region of Massachusetts, reports successful turnout to their parent empowerment sessions due to providing transportation, simultaneous translations, and child care that develops

preschool children's cognitive skills.

As mentioned earlier, migrant parents' low educational attainments and lack of experience with school culture precipitate the need for training. Parent training is a factor that can enhance and improve parents' attitude, ability, and confidence level as they participate in their children's education.

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Involving More Fathers and Parents of Secondary Students

Involving more fathers and parents of secondary students has been historically a concern of educators in Migrant Education and mainstream education. After discussing this need with the advisory committee and consulting the literature, PRIME staff asked parents and other Migrant Education staff for their suggestions on improving participation. Attendees at the National Parent Involvement Committee (NPIC) meeting in San Diego in February of 1991 and the New York State Migrant Education Conference in Silver Bay in September of 1991, in particular, were asked for their input.

Migrant parents suggested that a recruitment process is important to the involvement of fathers in activities designed for parental involvement. They suggested making home visits ahead of the event. Possibly a male could be a recruiter or a husband/wife team could make the visits. Parents should be encouraged to visit school accompanied by staff, if possible, to ease their anxieties regarding school. The focus of the activities is also important in determining male participation. Such activities as sports events, holiday parties, picnics, and children's awards ceremonies are potential draws for fathers. In Arizona, the Roosevelt Elementary School's PAC meetings are well attended by males as they are designed to appeal to fathers as well as mothers. Monthly meetings conducted in Spanish have focused on immigration problems, the census, job hunting, and school problems. Timing is also critical for fathers' involvement. Night or weekend activities sometimes provide fathers with the opportunity to participate.

Educators also note that parental involvement decreases as a child progresses through school. Parent work groups suggested to PRIME staff that school administration staff must consider involvement of the parents of secondary students to be important in order for it to take place. The administration must value parental involvement

at this level, convey its commitment to this endeavor to all staff, and see that opportunities are available for parental involvement, for instance, ensuring that convenient times are available for parents to meet with teachers. Migrant Education personnel need to take the role of the liaison between home and school. It is necessary to instill the attitude "Home is a school zone" in all educators. Specific activities were suggested for the involvement of the parents themselves:

- Pay parents or ask them to volunteer to share a talent such as performing music, cooking a traditional food, or making piñatas

- Have parents visit school and eat lunch with their child

- Encourage migrant secondary students to become involved in extracurricular events - the parents will likely attend events in which their children participate such as athletic events, musical and theatrical group performances

In the PRIME panel discussion about various strategies of involving more parents of secondary students and dropouts, Ms. Pell suggested a way that has worked well with Latino families: a Parent Appreciation Day. As a kick-off event, youth bring their parents to a potluck meal and give them recognition. Ms. Pell noted that Latino parents care as much for their older children as their younger ones and more than half of those surveyed by her program wanted their children to finish high school. She believes that in order to make parents push harder, educators should emphasize the difference in lifetime earnings for those with more education.

Migrant farmworkers often can bring rich backgrounds to share with schools, providing a multicultural outlook many schools lack.

Overcoming these barriers to involvement of parents in their children's education can yield benefits for the entire school. Migrant farmworkers often can bring rich backgrounds to share with schools, providing a multicultural outlook many schools lack.

III. Community/Business Support

Throughout the PRIME project, it became clear that is necessary to expand the concept of parental involvement to the community at large. A broadened idea of parental involvement includes the entire family's support system of the youth, the employers of the families and the entire community with resulting benefits of increased awareness and understanding of the student population, including

migrants, greater support for the students, and resources for the schools in a time of fiscal constraint.

Since there is an increasing breakdown of the traditional family unit, other adults can and should be encouraged to fill supportive roles. Parents suggested holding grandparents', families' and senior citizens' days in the school to extend the opportunity for involvement to other significant adults. Parents also commented on problems with employers who may not give them the needed flex time to attend a school meeting or parent/teacher conference. They suggested that Migrant Education staff could visit the grower to build a positive relationship and also make employers aware that migrant parents care about their children's schooling. School staff also need to be aware of the needs of parents for flexible scheduling of conference times. The PRIME panelists talked about business and community involvement believing that both arenas need to be sensitized about migrants. Educational programs such as English as a second language could be a good segue if businesses are made to realize the link between workplace literacy and worker productivity.

Schools working in collaboration with outside agencies can enrich their curriculum while expanding community consciousness.

Schools have found that businesses are sometimes willing to donate staff time, equipment and materials, as well as provide cash gifts for particular projects. PRIME Panel member Dr. Pérez of the McAllen, Texas Independent School District has involved the business community through the Partners in Excellence program in which professionals have come in and served as role models, businesses have donated computers and sponsored educational trips.

Schools working in collaboration with outside agencies can enrich their curriculum while expanding community consciousness. One example of such a collaboration is that of New York State's Cornell Migrant Program - Wayne County with various local schools, farmworker groups, youth programs, community action groups, and an arts council. These concerted efforts, open to the public, have resulted in multicultural events such as a gospel music concert, Mexican fiesta, an African American literature fair, and a night celebrating Caribbean cultures.

IV. Successful Strategies for Parental Involvement in Migrant Education

To gain knowledge of current parental involvement practices within Migrant Education, PRIME surveyed state directors, noted comments from PRIME advisory committee

members and migrant parent work groups, and reviewed the literature. PRIME sent out a survey to state directors of Migrant Education requesting information about parental involvement programs, strategies and materials. Many states responded, giving an overall view of the range and diversity of parent involvement activities across the country. (See Appendix for a summary.) A number of activities revolve around home visits, learning packets, family literacy activities, cultural events, and parent training to allow parents to develop their own skills and enable them to help their children in various subjects.

At Home Learning Activities

These activities include learning packets that parents use with their children. Project C.H.I.L.D. in Arizona and the Texas program, Building Bridges: A Home-Based Program for Migrant Three-Year Olds, are two preschool programs that include packets for parents to use at home. These programs have staff that make home visits to train parents in the use of the materials. Vermont's family-oriented summer program serves children age three through twelve. An educational activity booklet introduces families to enjoyable math games, reading and writing activities and construction projects. Teaching staff make home visits to provide parental assistance and support as well as to model learning activities. Kentucky also reports home visits as part of its advocacy services.

Parent Training

Many states provide informational meetings and workshops, often with bilingual materials and in Spanish. The Litchfield Elementary District in Arizona has developed family packets to improve language skills. La Familia Unida, based in Phoenix, Arizona, serves the whole family's educational and social services needs. Parents are offered Adult Basic Education, GED and English as a second language classes, participate in Parent Advisory Council meetings, and are linked with appropriate social services agencies. A District of Columbia program teaches meal planning/nutrition, budgeting and filling out forms. Parents as Trainers workshops were developed by the New York State Migrant Education Program and focus on five areas: stress, children's self-esteem, empowerment, parent involvement in the school, and AIDS education. Each workshop is approximately one and a half hours long, has hands-on activities and is intended to give parents the experience to lead a workshop with other migrant parents. California's Home-School Partnership Training offers migrant parents of children in pre-K to grade 6 workshops on self-esteem, motivation, home-study skills, parent-teacher conferences, discipline, and parent-teacher partnerships.

A number of programs focus on preschool children and their parents. The New York State Migrant Education Even Start program works with parents and their 3- and 4-year old children on intergenerational literacy activities and parenting skills through home visits. Oregon's Migrant Even Start program presents parent education discussions on drugs and alcohol, child development, nutrition, assertiveness training, among other topics; adult literacy and English as a second language classes; native language instruction in Spanish and Russian; and GED instruction. Migrant Head Start, a multi-disciplinary child development program that serves children from birth to school-age, provides education, health and social services, nutrition, and parental involvement ("Migrant Head Start Provides Comprehensive Services," 1990). Staff make home visits twice a year to ensure that parents can jointly develop their children's goals. Parents are

taught how to assess, seek help and care for their children's health as well as taught how to access and utilize local community services and resources.

In contrast, the Life Management Skills Parent Retreat in Texas is planned primarily for parents of older youth, particularly those at risk. This counseling retreat focuses on parents' self-image and leadership skills.

Alabama, Florida and Texas report parent resource centers that have instructional materials that parents can use. For instance, the Morgan County (Alabama) Migrant Education Program in combination with Chapter I resources has set up a resource center where parents may check out videos, cassettes, and books on child development and mental health topics.

Some training focuses on furthering parents' abilities to enhance their children's skills. Make and take workshops are part of Minnesota's summer activities for parents. Arizona has programs for parents that teach them how to help with their children's curriculum. Utah's workshops on math and reading help parents develop their children's skills in those subjects.

Enrichment

Some states provide cultural activities, such as fiestas in Minnesota's summer program and costume-making for a Cinco de Mayo dance, a project of parents in the Liberty Elementary District in Arizona. The Murphy Elementary District in Arizona provides educational excursions for parents to help them improve their English and to encourage them to return to the site with their families. Oregon's migrant middle school students and their parents have the opportunity to attend an annual College Day at the University of Oregon in order to experience college life.

Access

Many states provide transportation, child care, and translation. These services show a program's determination to involve parents. The services are sporadic, however, and are dependent on a program's priorities.

Home/School Communication

State and local Parent Advisory Councils (PAC) meetings are the primary means of parent-school communication. Pennsylvania's, for example, focus on parent leadership skills. Some states, such as Oregon, keep parents informed through newsletters. Many states have staff that make home visits. One program in Alaska reports over a 60% response rate to its parental needs assessment.

V. Recommendations

1. **Recognize the importance of parental involvement and develop plans on a state level**
2. **Implement parent training as key to children's academic success**
3. **Recognize parents as resources of cultural enrichment**
4. **Improve home/school communication**
5. **Make parental involvement activities accessible by overcoming obstacles**
6. **Commit resources for staff to coordinate parental involvement activities**
7. **Ensure that parental involvement activities extend through the secondary level**
8. **Broaden the concept of parental involvement to include the community at large**

Migrant Education faces the formidable challenge of fostering a partnership between parents and schools. By recognizing parents as their children's first teachers and drawing upon their knowledge, skills, and love of their children, migrant educators and the children themselves will gain the rewards of more effective schooling.

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Appendix

PARENTAL RESOURCES FOR INVOLVEMENT IN MIGRANT EDUCATION (PRIME)

Results from State Directors' Survey Form

State Directors were requested to send PRIME information about effective parent involvement programs, strategies and materials from their states. Some of the information is highlighted below:

ALABAMA

- Parent resource center

ALASKA

- Home visits
- Magazine subscription for each family
- Parents' needs assessment

ARIZONA

- Project C.H.I.L.D. - serves K-3 students and families through cassette recording of a story in English and Spanish with follow-up activities and a home visit
- Project P.A.D.R.E.S. - parents help children in the all day kindergarten improve English skills and also participate in enrichment activities
- Family packets to improve language skills
- Parent meetings that provide age-appropriate activities for children
- Educational excursions for parents to improve their English and to encourage them to return to sites with their families
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings designed to appeal to fathers as well as mothers, including topics on jobs, immigration, the census

CALIFORNIA

- Home-School Partnership Training - develops parents' leadership skills

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

- Parent training in nutrition/meal planning, helping child at home, making a budget, filling out forms, and successful parenting

FLORIDA

- Home visits by bilingual, former migrants
- Open parent visitation policy in one county's program
- English/Spanish program information, parent meetings
- Interpreters

GEORGIA

- Parent Tutorial Project - one-on-one parenting skills approach

KENTUCKY

- Advocacy services through home visits and district/community networking

LOUISIANA

- Even Start - serves parents and children ages 1-7 through basic skills and ESL, referrals, home visits for parents and educational activities for children taught by their parents who have seen the activities modeled by staff

MASSACHUSETTS

- Parent empowerment sessions with simultaneous translation, transportation, and child care that develops preschool children's cognitive skills

MINNESOTA

- Summer activities: Make and Take workshops, Open Houses, fiestas, potluck suppers, children's programs, Local Education Agency (LEA) PAC meetings
- School year activities: Parents meet with SEA representatives in Texas at an organized meeting

NEBRASKA

- State PAC meetings that have a student competition

NEW YORK

- Even Start - serves parents and 3- and 4-year olds through preschool home literacy activities, home visits, adult literacy and parenting skills
- Parents as Trainers - workshops on empowerment, parent involvement in the schools, stress, self-esteem, and AIDS education

OREGON

- Parent manuals in English and Spanish
- Marion County ESD Even Start - serves parents and children ages 1-7 through parenting skills, child development activities, adult literacy, ESL, native language instruction in Spanish and Russian, and GED instruction

- College Day - middle school students and parents visit University of Oregon campus to experience college life
- MOMS (Mothers of Migrant Students) - provides mothers with information on educational issues and parent involvement
- ESL Teen Parent Program - offers academic programs, ESL, counseling, child care and transportation
- Home/School Consultant Workshop - dissemination of parent involvement, Migrant Education information, MSRTS and insurance information
- Newsletter for staff and parents
- Chapter 1-M conference calls

PENNSYLVANIA

- PAC meetings that develop parent leadership, address different ethnic and cultural groups and agricultural activities

TEXAS

- Building Bridges: A Home-Based Program for Migrant Three-Year Olds - serves parents and 3-year olds through home visits, children's language skills activities, child development theory for parents
- Life Management Skills retreat
- Spanish materials showing the value of parent involvement
- Parent Involvement Program - 6-weeks of parenting sessions (1 hour per week) followed by set-up of parent center where volunteers participate
- Parent resource centers

UTAH

- Workshops designed to give parents ideas for helping children with math and reading

VERMONT

- Home visits
- Parents are shown how to assist children with summer activities booklet

WASHINGTON

- Spanish/English manual to train Parent Advisory Council staff in procedures for meetings and to develop their leadership skills
- Spanish video on building family self-esteem

WISCONSIN

- Parent Involvement Resource Manual - for preservice or inservice training